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MINUTES

OF THE

STATE CONVENTION

OF THE

Baptist Denomination,

IN

SOUTH CAROLINA,

Held at Minervaville, December 6th, and continued to December 9th, 1828.

1. THE Convention Sermon was delivered, according to appointment, by brother Dossey, from Acts ii. 42—"And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine."

2. After prayer by brother Cook, the letters from Associations and Societies were read, and the names of their delegates enrolled, as follows :—

ASSOCIATIONS,&c.	DELEGATES.	ABSENTEES.
Charleston	J. B Cook	W. Q. Beattie
	J. Hartwell	P. Ludlow
	W. Dossey	J. B. Furman
	C. D. Mallary	
	P. P. Bowen	
	T. Dargan	
	S. Blanding	
	J. B. Miller	
	B. Manly	

ASSOCIATIONS,&c.	DELEGATES.	ABSENTEES.
Edgefield	N. W. Hodges	J. Landrum
	R. Carson	R. M Todd
	Z. Rudulph, sen.	W. Belcher
	J. Blocker	J. T. Coleman
	M. Mims	J. Chiles
Savannah River	T. Polhill	J. Graham
	W. A. Lawton	D. Peeples
	W. H. Brisbane	M. Swift
	A. J. Lawton	J. T. Robert
	J. O'Bannon	T. Verstille
	L. M. Brown	F. Baker
		S. V. Hubbard
Ed'n. & Miss'y. Soc. of Saluda	W. B. Johnson	S. Gibson
	J. Crowther	W. M'Gee
Fellowship Benevolent Society		J. W. Williams
		J. T. Coleman
Congaree Benevolent Society	R. Weston.	

3. The following brethren were elected Officers, viz.: W. B. Johnson, President; J. B. Cook, Vice President; B Manly, Secretary; and M. Mims, Treasurer.

4. The Minutes of the Convention at its last meeting were read by the Secretary.

5. A letter was received and read from the Saluda Baptist Association. The brethren Johnson and Crowther, who are otherwise members of this body, were the only messengers present, and were acknowledged and welcomed in that character.

6. Brethren Marshall and Davis (J. Shannon failing to attend) appeared as messengers from the Baptist Convention for the State of Georgia. Their letter was read, and the brethren cordially invited to a seat.

7. The following Committees were appointed:

On the arrangement of preaching during the meeting—C. D. Mallary, T. Dargan and S. Blanding

The committee of revision—Cook, Hartwell, Polhill, Hodges, Dossey and Manly.

The committee on accounts—Miller, Rudulph and A. J. Lawton.

8. *Resolved*, That a committee be raised called the Committee of Religion, to collect information on the state of

religion within the state, and report to the Convention. The following brethren were appointed--Manly, Hodges, Polhill, Johnson, Mallary and Williams.

9. Appointed brother W. A. Lawton to write to the Baptist Convention of Georgia ; and brother W. H. Brisbane to the Saluda Association.

10. The committee on the subject of the publication of a periodical religious paper, reported--" That they had had the subject under serious consideration, and are of opinion that the undertaking is at this time inexpedient. They advise that, in place of this, it be recommended earnestly to the churches to encourage the publication of the Star, now printed at Philadelphia, and edited by the Rev. W. T. Brantly." This report was concurred in.

11. Appointed messengers to the Convention of Georgia, viz. --brethren Mallary, Hodges, Cook, Bowen, Brisbane and Manly. To the Saluda Association, brethren Cook, Hartwell, Hodges and Dossey.

12. The Circular Letter, prepared by brother Johnson, was referred, without reading, to the committee of revision, together with the author.

13. A letter was received from the President of the Board of Trustees of the Columbian College, which was referred to the President, Vice President and J. Hartwell.

14. A resolution offered by brother J. B. Miller, concerning the religious instruction of colored people, was referred to Miller, Blanding and A. J. Lawton.

Brother Crowther prayed, and the Convention adjourned until 11 o'clock of Monday.

The Lord's Day was spent in devotional exercises. The Charity Sermon was delivered by the President, from Mat. vi. 10--" Thy Kingdom come." The collection after service amounted to 56 dollars. Brother Manly preached the Sermon preparatory to the Lord's Supper, which was administered by brethren Hartwell and Davis. Notwithstanding the rainy state of the weather, the meeting was truly interesting and hopeful.

Monday Morning, 11 *o'clock*. The Convention met, and entered on its business with prayer by brother Marshall.

15. The committee of revision reported the Circular and Corresponding Letters for adoption, which were severally read and received.

16. At the suggestion of the committee of revision, *Resolved*, That brother Johnson be requested to write the next Circular Letter, on the question, " What are the works

that may be scripturally attended to on the Christian Sabbath ; and what are the great ends that its appointment was designed to answer in the moral government of God ?"

17. The committee appointed in the 14th Article, reported—" That they have had the subject under consideration : they recommend, that on the Lord's Day, after Divine Service, or at some convenient hour in the day, the Minister, or some member or members of the church, should assemble the colored people together, and engage in the business of reading and explaining the Scriptures to them in a manner suited to their capacities ; and encouraging them to repeat and commit to memory such parts of them as may be suited to their case : That the obligation to observe the ten commands be impressed on their minds ; and the Sermon on the Mount, their duty as servants, as neighbours, and members of the church, be expounded to them : That, as far as practicable, they be divided into classes, over whom some discreet coloured member of the church be placed as leader, who shall watch over their conduct." This report was concurred in.

18. The following brethren were elected Agents, viz. : J. Hartwell, C. D. Mallary, W. A. Lawton, N. W. Hodges, T. Polhill and J. Landrum ; who, together with the Officers of the Convention, form the Board of Agents for the ensuing year.

19. Agreed to divide the amount of the public collection taken at this meeting equally between the Education and Missionary Funds.

20. The Board of Agents for the last year reported as usual, by reading their whole minutes; which were approved, and ordered to be printed with the Minutes of the Convention.

21. *Resolved*, That the President be requested to authorize any individuals, who may be willing to undertake an agency in favour of the objects of this body, to raise and collect subscriptions as they may be able.

22. Appointed the Rev. Peter Ludlow, (and in case of his failure Col. John B. Miller) the delegate of this body to the General Missionary Convention, to assemble in Philadelphia in April next ; the Secretary to furnish him with a letter.

23. Committed the printing and distribution of fifteen hundred copies of these Minutes to the Secretary.

24. Appointed the next meeting of this body to be held in

the *city of Charleston*,* on the *Saturday before the second Lord's Day in December*, 1829. Brother Hartwell to commence the service on Saturday at 11 o'clock,—in case of failure, brother Cook ; brother Johnson to preach the Convention Sermon on Saturday evening at candle light,—in case of failure, brother Dossey ; brother Mallary to preach the Charity Sermon on Sunday Evening at candle light,—in case of failure brother Hodges.

25. Voted the cordial thanks of this body to the inhabitants of this vicinity, for their kind and hospitable attention to its members and friends during the meeting.

Brother Carson prayed, and the Convention adjourned until Tuesday morning 9 o'clock.

Tuesday, *December* 9. The Convention met according to adjournment, prayer by the Secretary.

26. The Report of the Committee on accounts was accepted, and ordered to be printed with the minutes.

27. *Resolved*, that whenever the principal, or any part thereof, of the Gillison Fund shall be paid into the Treasurer's hands, that he invest the same in Bank or Government Stock.

28. *Resolved*, that the future bonds of the Treasurer shall contain the following clause, viz. "That this bond or obligation be good and enure to the benefit of the said Convention, against us the above-named, and our executors and administrators, for and during the whole term for which the said has been elected Treasurer as aforesaid ; and until another shall be elected, and give bond, and enter on the duties of his office."

29. *Resolved*, That a legacy of 50 dollars bequeathed, by the late Mr. Archibald M'Quiston, and paid by his representative, be added to the principal of the Gillison Fund.

30. Agreed, that the money which has been contributed from Charleston toward founding a Scholarship in the Furman Academy, be put to interest by the Treasurer.

31. Voted, that the Treasurer, be requested to transmit to the Treasurer of the General Convention, all the funds in his hands for the Withington Station, and for foreign missions.

* The delegates and brethren who may attend, are requested to come into the city, if convenient, as early as Friday evening preceding the meeting, and to repair immediately to the house, either of Mr. Peter G. Gerard, or of Mr. Edward G. Sass, (situated opposite each other in Queen Street, between Meeting and King Streets,) where a committee will wait to receive them, and provide for their accommodation.

32. The committee on the Columbian College made the following report, which was ordered to be printed:—"That since the last meeting of the convention, the affairs of that Institution have assumed a favourable attitude; that the Subscription of fifty thousand dollars has been filled up, of which large amounts have been collected and applied to the extinction of the debt which had threatened its ruin: That the Faculty, or Instructors, are equal to any in similar Institutions, and that the healthful and beautiful situation of the College Edifice, added to its proximity to Washington, gives it strong claims to public patronage.

Your Committee therefore recommend that the friends of science and religion continue their energetic efforts in favour of this Institution, being assured that their contributions will be faithfully applied to the balance of the debt still due; That parents of our Denomination, in sending their sons to a seat of learning for a collegiate course, should place them at the Columbian College; and thus extend that fostering care to the Institution, which, if liberally afforded, will enable it under the divine blessing, to strike its roots deep, send forth its branches far and wide, and bear fruit that shall shake like Lebanon."

33. The Board submitted in detail a statement of the condition of the Furman Academy and Theological Institution; whereupon, after considerable discussion, it was resolved,

That, as there have appeared insuperable obstacles to the success of this Institution, on its present plan, and in its present location; to secure the important objects of the Convention, as well as to fulfil the part of candour and justice to the Trustees of the Edgefield Village Academy, and the inhabitants of that place, it is necessary to abandon at present the classical department of the school, to surrender to the donors the property given with a view to that department, and to make an equitable compromise with subscribers of the same character.

Resolved also, That our Beneficiaries be placed, for the present, under the care and tuition of the Rev. J. Hartwell at his own residence, with a view in future to establish the Institution in more strict accordance, with the original design of making the theological department most prominent.

34 *Resolved*, That brethren Johnson, Manly, Mims, Blanding and W. A. Lawton, be a committee to make enquiry and collect information on the subject of a suitable site for the Institution, and report at the next meeting of the Convention.

The President adjourned the meeting with the Christian benediction.

MINUTES

OF THE

BOARD OF AGENTS.

Edgefield, Tuesday Evening, Dec. 4, 1827.

The Board met. Present the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, together with brethren J. Hartwell, C. D. Mallary, N. W. Hodges and M. Swift.

1. Received the application of Issachar J. Roberts, of Tennessee, for aid in pursuing studies with a view to the ministry. The Board proceeded carefully to the examination of his credentials, as a christian and a minister; also his religious experience, his views of doctrine, and his call to preach the gospel; and received him as the beneficiary of the Convention.

2. Owing to the acceptance of the beneficiary as above stated, the Board agreed for the present to withhold the appropriations for the increase of the library and for the purchase of a bell, as being of less consequence than the former.

3. The principal of the institution presented the rules formed for the regulation of the library; which, with some amendments, were adopted.

4. Owing to the pecuniary embarrassment of the community, the board agreed not to employ an agent this year; but to put the agent's books and papers into the hands of the president, to take means for having the subscriptions collected, through the aid of some one best qualified, in the respective neighbourhoods, with authority to allow such persons 5 per cent on collections for their services.

5. The executive committee appointed last year was reappointed, viz.—E. Simkins, sen. W. Brooks and M. Mims.

6. Agreed to appropriate to Nathaniel Gaines and David Simmons the sum of five dollars each, to be laid out by the President in books for their use.

7. Resolved, that the salary of the principal for the ensuing year be the same as the past.

8. Appointed W. Brooks, Esq. and Rev. Messrs. Landrum and Hodges to attend to the renewal of the Treasurer's bond. And the Board adjourned.

Edgefield, 16*th June*, 1828.

1. The board met at the Academy at 8 o'clock, to attend the examination of the students—the following members of the Board being present, viz. the President, Vice President, and Treasurer, together with J. Hartwell, J. Landrum, A. J. Lawton and N. W. Hodges.

2. 17*th June*. The examination of the School, both Classical and Theological, having been gone through, the Board met on other business, and requested brother Hodges to act as Secretary.

3. *Resolved*, That considering all the disadvantages under which the school has labored the past session from the ill health of the Principal, the Board feel gratified with the proficiency of the pupils in their studies, and especially with that of the Theological Students.

4. *Resolved*, That the Board feel highly gratified with the Essays in Theology, which were produced by the Theological Students ; and that the President express to them the pleasure which the Board have experienced in their examination and performances.

5. In reviewing the minutes for June 16th, 1827, a mistake has been discovered, in saying that brother W. A. Lawton reported he had complied with the request of the Board in furnishing a certain brother (J. Brooker) with books. It appears from a reconsideration of the matter that this statement was incorrectly made. Brother Lawton now however informs the Board that he has complied with this request : but brother Brooker affirming that he had not time to read the books, brother Lawton has purchased them of him, and now returns the money, 12 dollars, with a request from brother Brooker, that it should be appropriated to missionary purposes.

6. The President reported that in discharge of the duty assigned him in the 4th article of the minutes of the Board for December, he had addressed letters to certain individuals and requested them to act as collecting agents. Brother A. J. Lawton, who was one of them, reported that he had collected 64 dollars from subscribers.

7. The President reported that he had complied with the request of the Convention in furnishing books for N. Gaines and D. Simmons.

8. The President laid before the Board the resignation of the Rev. Mr. Warne, as Principal of the Furman Academy ; and also informed the Board that a correspondence had been carried on between brother W. T. Brantly, of Philadelphia, and several members of the Board in relation to his becom-

ing the principal of the academy: two letters recently received from him on that subject, were read. The proceedings of the church and congregation of Edgefield Village in relation to brother Brantly as Pastor of the church, and Principal of the Academy, were also laid before the Board.

9. Proceeded to the election of a Principal for the Furman Academy, when it appeared that W. T. Brantly was unanimously elected.

10. *Resolved*, That the President be authorized to communicate this election to Brother Brantly and inform him that besides 500 dollars for the theological department, the Convention will ensure to him 1000 dollars from the school for the first year.

11. *Resolved*, That the School go on the next session, under the direction and instruction of brother W. D. Cowdrey; and that he receive the proceeds of the School as his compensation. Also, that the Theological Students continue their classical studies with him. And the Board adjourned.

Bethel Church, *Nov.* 1. 1828.

The Board met. Present, the President, J. B. Cook, C. D. Mallary, M. Mims, J. Hartwell, N. W. Hodges and B. Manly.

1. The President stated that the Rev. Mr. Brantly, who had been elected Principal of the Furman Academy at the meeting of the Board in June last, had declined accepting the appointment; and read a letter from him to that effect. After considerable conversation on the subject of a Principal for the Institution, it was agreed to postpone the election for the present.

2. *Resolved*, That the President be requested to become the General Agent of the Convention for one year: and that should he accept this appointment, and employ his time exclusively in the service of the Convention, the salary which he shall be entitled to expect, shall be one thousand dollars.

The Board adjourned to meet on Monday morning at 9 o'clock.

Monday Morning. The Board met according to adjournment; all the members as above being present.

After considerable conversation on the subject of a Principal, it was agreed that the election be postponed until the meeting of the Convention in December next.

And the Board adjourned.

Minervaville, *Dec. 6th.* 1828.

The Board met. Present the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer, with brethren Mallary, Hartwell, Hodges, and Lawton.

1. Brother A. J. Lawton, stated that under the appointment of the President he had collected 21 dollars from subscribers, and had the promise of more within a short time.

2. The Board received information that the Treasurer's Bond had been duly renewed

3. The chairman of the committee on the repairs of the buildings reported, that in consequence of the falling down of a chimney in the yard of the Principal's house, it had become necessary to rebuild it: which report was concurred in by the Board. The Board adjourned, *sine die.*

STATE OF ASSOCIATIONS, UNITED IN THE CONVENTION.

The *Charleston Association* contains 43 churches, 28 ordained ministers, 19 licensed preachers, and 4757 communicants. Baptized last year 726 Seven Education and Missionary Societies are connected with the Association; and also several Sabbath Schools; but their number, though believed to be considerable, is not known, as nearly all the churches, in their letters, are silent respecting these powerful auxiliaries. An incorporated body, styled the General Committee of the Churches, having charge of the education and mission funds, and the education of beneficiaries recommended by the churches, is united with the Association, and meets at the same time and place with them. The Itinerant Board, having the control of the domestic missions within its bounds, is appointed by the Association at its annual meetings; and by a late resolution, auxiliary societies, contributing fifty dollars annually to this board, have the privilege of sending a delegate with the same powers as those nominated by the Association. The "South Carolina Anti-Intemperance Society," though not directly connected with the Association, is composed principally of its members, and holds its annual meetings at the regular sessions of this body. The amount of moneys sent up by the churches and societies last year, in aid of the funds of the various religious charities in which the Association is engaged, was 873 dollars. The next meeting of the Association will be held at Darlington Court House, on the Saturday (31st October) before the first Lord's Day in November, 1829.

The *Edgefield Association* contains 38 churches, 22 ordained ministers and 2 licentiates.—14 Sabbath Schools have been in operation during the past year—there are 2 Bible Societies and one Tract Society—there has a been Domes-

tic Missionary Society established, in the bounds of the Association, which is supported by 17 churches and 4 auxiliary Societies. This Society, entitled "the Edgefield Domestic Missionary Society," has been enabled to employ one Missionary the present year, "to travel through the District of Edgefield, but more particularly the neighbourhoods destitute of preaching, that the poor might have the Gospel preached unto them, visit from house to house in order to impart religious instruction in private as well as in public, organize Sunday Schools, and be with the churches composing the Society, at their stated meetings as often as praticable." Good has already resulted from these labours. The prospects of religion in the bounds of the Association generally begin to brighten; the fields are already white to the harvest, and only want labourers to gather it in. In several churches there has been some special excitement of late, and considerable additions to their number. The number baptized last year, is 241. Their next meeting is to be at Mount Moriah, Abbeville, on the Saturday before the fourth Lord's day in October, 1829.

In the *Savannah River Association*, are 27 churches, 18 ordained ministers, 4 licentiates, 3530 communicants, 5 Sunday Schools, 3 Tract Societies, 3 Bible Societies, 1 Missionary Society, and a Missionary and Education Society. Four hundred and twenty-five have been baptized the past year. Their next meeting is to be with the Healing Springs Church, Barnwell District, on the Saturday before the fourth Lord's day in November, 1829.

TREASURER'S ACCOUNTS.

THE Committee, to whom was referred the collection of monies, and auditing the Treasurer's Accounts, Report—

GILLISON FUND.

Jan. 29, 1827	In the hands of the former Treasurer, as per transfer, with interest from 17th Dec. 1826	$4000 00
Jan. 21, 1828	Rec'd the above Interest to 17th Dec 1827	280 00
	Rec'd. from Fellowship Benevolent Society	13 00
24,	From W. B. Johnson on Subscriptions	17 00
Dec. 8,	Fellowship Benevolent Society	14 50
		$4324 50
Jan. 21,	Paid J. A. Warne for 5th Quarter, 125 00	
	for 6th ditto, 125 00	250 00
		4074 50
	By the Gillison Fund, yet in the hands of the former Treasurer, as above stated	4000 00
	On hand Dec. 8, 1828,	$74 00

COLUMBIAN COLLEGE.

Jan. 29, 1827—On hand,	$50 00
June 17, 1828—Paid Rev. Eli Ball,	50 00
On hand, nothing,	00 00

FUND TO FOUND A SCHOLARSHIP IN THE FURMAN ACADEMY,
By the Female Juvenile Society in Charleston.

Nov. 3, 1828—Cash Rec'd by Rev. B. Manly,	$80 00

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

Dec. 31, 1827—Cash on hand,	$179 46
Dec. 8th, 1828—From Mrs. Boykin,	20 00
Miss Sarah Boykin,	5 00
Miss Elizabeth Boykin,	5 00
Rev. C. D. Mallary, on his Subscription,	10 00
On hand,	$219 46

FOREIGN MISSIONS.

Dec. 3, 1827—On hand	$87 75
Nov 10, 1828—Rec'd from Jesse Blocker, Trea. Edgefield Ass'n.	1 62
Dec. 8, Savannah River Association,	14 00
Half of 56 Dolls. public collection taken at this Convention,	28 00
From R. Gaines, 12 cts.—H. Brockman, 25 cts.	00 38
W. Johnson, 12—S. Vandiver, 25	00 37
	132 12
Credit.	
Dec, 27, 1827—By cash sent to H. Lincoln,	80 00
Postage from Boston,	00 25
	80 25
On hand,	51 87

DOMESTIC MISSIONS.

Dec. 3, 1827—On hand,	37 31
June 17, 1828—Rec'd. from John Brooker, per W. A. Lawton,	12 00
On hand,	49 31

GENERAL PURPOSES.

Dec. 3, 1827—On hand,	81 40
Dec. 8, 1828—From Fellowship Benevolent Society,	5 00
Savannah River Association,	28 84
Saluda Auxiliary Society,	9 62
	124 86
Credit.	
Paid W. Riley for Printing Minutes,	70 00
On hand,	54 86

FUND TO AID PIOUS YOUNG MEN IN THE MINISTRY.

Dec. 3. 1827—On hand,	102 68
Dec. 8, 1828—Rec'd. from the Beaufort Female Education and Missionary Society,	20 00
On hand,	122 68

WITHINGTON STATION.

Dec. 3, 1827—Cash on hand,		51 00
Dec. 3, 1828—Rec'd. from the Citizens of Edgefield and its vicinity, per T. Simons,		10 00
8, From the Savannah Association—but if this station is broken up, this sum to be disposed of at the option of the Board of Foreign Missions of the General Convention,		15 00
Congaree Benevolent Society,		26 6
		102 6
Credit.		
Dec. 27, 1827—By cash sent to H. Lincoln, 50 dolls. Postage from Boston, 25 cts.		50 25
On hand,		51 81

EDUCATION FUND.

Dec. 4, 1827—Cash on hand,		232 87
Received from a Friend		1 00
From a Female Friend, per Mr. Warne		10 00
Rev. W. B. Johnson on subscriptions		14 00
Apr. 12, 1828—From J. O'Bannon on subscriptions, per Mrs. Phillips		31 00
June 9, From the same, per S. Butler, Esq. Rev. D. Peeple's subscription to Furman Academy,		60 00
17, From A. J. Lawton on subscriptions,		64 00
Aug. 12, From I. Roberts, for his board, as charged by Mr. Warne,		8 33
Nov. 3, Mrs John Townsend subscription,		2 00
10, From Jesse Blocker, Trea'r. of Edgefield Asso'n. public collection at the Red Oak Grove,		58 00
From the same, for Furman Academy,		19 50
Dec. 8, From J. O'Bannon, for J. A. Sanders' subscription		5 00
From same, for W. H. Smith's subscription,		6 00
From Dr. S. Blanding his subscription,		5 00
Fellowship Benevolent Society, from a Friend,		10 00
From W. H. Brisbane, on his subscription,		10 00
The half of $56, pub. col. taken at this Convention,		28 00
From Z. Rudulph, sen. his subscription,		10 00
From A. J. Lawton, on subscriptions,		21 00
		595 70
Credit.		
Dec. 4, 1827—Paid Rev. W. B. Johnson, for Books for N. Gaines and D. Simmons,		10 00
6, Joseph A. Warne for board. &c.		111 25
8, H. & R. Drake for Well Brick,		5 50
N. Christian for Well Kirb,		7 00
Postage from Charleston,		00 19
June 11, W. Milton for fitting Library Room,		19 89
15, Postage to Philadelphia,		00 25
21, J. A. Warne, for boarding Theol. Students,		113 83
Aug. 7, W. Cowdrey, tuition of Beneficiaries,		15 00
15, A. Pemberton, Printer's bill,		3 75
Nov. 13, Freight and Postage from Charleston,		1 62
28, For a Box of Books for Library,		00 25
Dec. 3, Jas. Hamill, for Chimney to the Principal's Kitchen		43 38
		331 90
On hand,		263 80

☞ The General Committee of Churches in the Charleston Association, voted 150 dollars, to be applied to the objects of the Convention, which the Delegates from that Association agreed to divide equally between the Education and Missionary Funds; but which has not yet been paid in, owing to a delay attendant on changing the Treasurer of the General Committee.

RECAPITULATION.

Gillison Fund,	74 50
Interest on the 4000 dollars, not due till 17th inst.	
Columbian College,	00 00
Theological Seminary,	219 46
Foreign Missions,	51 87
Domestic Missions,	49 31
General Purposes,	54 86
Fund to aid Young Men,	122 68
Withington Station,	51 81
Education Fund,	263 80
Fund to found a Scholarship,	80 00
On hand,	968 30

ADDRESS TO THE CHURCHES.

The STATE CONVENTION OF THE BAPTIST DENOMINATION IN SOUTH CAROLINA, *to their constituents, and their brethren throughout the State, send Christian salutation.*

BELOVED BRETHREN,

As the subject of our present address, we solicit your attention to "the consideration of the Christian Sabbath, as to the scriptural manner, in which it should be spent by the churches of Christ, and the objects, which would be most likely to be secured by *such* a manner of spending it." In order to treat these points in a form, that may tend to a profitable result, we shall offer some preliminary remarks on the Sabbath, and the authority by which its observance is enforced.

The term "Sabbath" is of Hebrew origin, and signifies rest. It points out the *intention* of the seventh day, which God has sanctified, but does not prescribe its *employments*. In the law of the ten commandments, commonly called *the moral law*, the fourth precept requires, that we "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sab-

bath of the Lord thy God : in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates : for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day : wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it." Ex xx. 8, 9, 10, 11. In this precept a distinction between the day and its design is evidently made, by calling the seventh day the Sabbath. The term "Sabbath," denotes *rest* from earthly labour, the term "seventh," denotes the *portion of time* for that rest.

It is worthy of notice that this precept forms a part of that law, which the Saviour came "to fulfill, and not to destroy"—Matt. v. 11, 12—of that law whose penalty is thus written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." Gal. iii. 10. It is farther worthy of notice, that, of all the laws, which God has given to man, none were delivered under such tremendous sanctions, as those which accompanied this law, none were written by the finger of Jehovah upon tables of stone, but this law. Why all the startling circumstances of its delivery ? Why the tables of stone ? Why the curse ? Evidently to indicate its unbending authority, its perpetuity, and the awful doom of its transgressor. All the precepts of this holy law, stand upon the same footing, and are, therefore, enforced by the same sanctions. They are, therefore, all equally obligatory. Of course, a violation of any one of these precepts exposes the transgressor to the curse, as a violation of the whole does. For "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, do not commit adultery, said also do not kill. Now, if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law." Jas ii. 10, 11. Does the law, under the penalty of the curse, forbid murder ? under the same penalty it forbids the violation of the Sabbath Day. Does the law, under the sanction of eternal banishment from Jehovah's presence, forbid that we have any other God before Him ? under the same sanction does it forbid the violation of the Sabbath Day. Any one, therefore, is as much at liberty to commit murder, worship idols, or disobey any precept of the law, as to violate the Sabbath Day. For on the same principle, and by the same authority, that he is forbidden to disobey any one precept, he is forbidden to disobey every other.

But it may be said, however correct this reasoning is in relation to the Sabbath under the former dispensation, yet

it is not so under the present; for the strict observance of the Sabbath was enjoined under the Levitical law; but as that is now abrogated, so also is the strict observance of the Sabbath To point out this sophism, this misapprehension of the subject, (for it is nothing else,) it will be proper to revert to the distinction, which we have already made, between the seventh day and the Sabbath. The term, "seventh," relates to a *given portion* of time, the term Sabbath to the *design* of that portion. As the seventh portion of time was originally set apart for rest, it is evident that there was a moral reason, that is, a reason originating in the constitution of things, for such a portion to be so set apart. But whether that portion should be in the beginning, the middle, or the end of the week, depended upon the pleasure of the Creator, and therefore might be altered at his pleasure, without abolishing its use, changing its design, or weakening its authority. Saturday, the last day of the week, was the day under the Jewish economy. Under the Christian dispensation, as we shall presently shew, Sunday, the first day of the week, is the day set apart as the day of rest and holy use.

You will observe, that the institution of the Sabbath did not originate with the Jewish or Levitical law—it originated before Abraham, the father of the Jewish race, was born. It was instituted in the Garden of Eden, and was designed, not for one people only, but for all mankind. The division of time by weeks was known to the Heathen, and observed by them. Laban says to Jacob, "Fulfil her week"—Gen. xxix. 27. The Philistines had seven days festival at a wedding—Judges xiv. 12, 15, 17. And Heathen writers speak of the division of days by sevens, and of the sacredness of the seventh day. Noah, in sending out his winged messengers to ascertain the state of the waters, observed the period of seven days—Gen. viii. 10—12. Now all these facts serve to shew, that the institution of the Sabbath of the seventh day was of universal obligation, and handed down by tradition to the nations of the earth, though often abused, and in process of time perhaps forgotten. But that it was observed by the Jews previous to the delivery of the ten commands, as stated in the 20th of Exodus, and previous also to the Levitical law, we have proof in the 16th chapter of that book—"And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man; and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, to-morrow is the rest of the Holy Sabbath"—Ex. xvi.

22, 23. The language of the fourth command proves this most clearly: "Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy." The term "Remember," implies a calling to mind what had been said before. The Sabbath of the seventh day formed then no part of that covenant, (the Levitical or Jewish law,) which, in the Apostle's time waxed old, and was ready to vanish away. For it depends upon the appointment of Jehovah in the Garden of Eden, and therefore is obligatory upon all men.

Now that, only, which is essential to the appointment of the Sabbath, is, that a given portion of time be set apart by divine authority for sacred rest and holy duties. And the obligation upon all men to observe this portion of time, when it is made known to them, is as binding, as the obligation to have no Gods before Jehovah, to abstain from murder, theft and adultery. From what has been said, then, you will readily perceive, that the Lord God, who set apart the seventh portion of time in the Garden of Eden as the Sabbath, and fixed that portion for the Jews, on Saturday, the last day of the week; may, if he please, change that portion of time, by fixing it on Sunday, the first day of the week, as the Sabbath for another people, without abrogating the holy day of rest, or weakening its moral obligation.

Having, thus, as we trust, clearly shown the design of the Sabbath, and the principle, on which its institution rests, we shall now proceed to show, that Sunday, the first day of the week, is the christian Sabbath.

Our Lord arose from the dead on the first day of the week, Matt. xxviii. and the same day at even, stood in the midst of his disciples, who, for fear of the Jews, were assembled with closed doors. On that day week, Jesus again stood in the midst of his disciples, who were assembled as before. John xx. 19—26. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they (the disciples) were all with one accord in one place." Acts ii. 1. The term "Pentecost," is of Greek origin, and signifies *fiftieth*. An account of the institution of this day is given in Leviticus. "And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete, even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath, shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord." This fiftieth day is the "Pentecost," the morrow after the seventh Sabbath, and therefore the first day of the week. In the 20th of Acts, it is said, that "Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples were come together" at Troas "to break,

bread, Paul preached unto them."—Acts xx. 7. It would, therefore appear that the first day of the week was the stated time of the meeting of the disciples at Troas

In the epistle to the Corinthians, the Apostle directs that "Upon the first day of the week, every one should lay by him in store, as God had prospered him, that there be no gatherings when he came."— 2d Cor. xvi. 2. These contributions were evidently not to be kept by each one laid up at home, but by the church, since if this were not the case, gatherings would have been necessary on the Apostle's arrival. The first day of the week appears then to have been the stated time of the assembling of the Corinthian church; and not of that church only, but also of the churches in Galatia; for the Apostle had given to these churches the same order that had been given to the church at Corinth.

In the investigation that we have pursued, we have seen that wherever the day is mentioned, on which the churches of Christ met after his resurrection, that day is the first day of the week. This day could have superseded the seventh day, and been established as the Sabbath, *only* by divine authority. This authority is found in the commission which the Saviour, at his ascension, gave to his disciples: "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; *teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you.*" —Mat. xxviii 19, 20. If the first day of the week were not the stated day of rest, and for the assembling of the church under the new dispensation, how could the Apostles teach or sanction its observance? In one case the Apostle saith to the Corinthians, "So ordain I in all churches" —1st Cor. vii. 17: and in another place, "For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach *every where in every church*"—1st. Cor. iv. 17. The same order was, therefore, taught in all the churches

The Apostles of the circumcision, and Paul, the Apostle of the uncircumcision, received their authority in the churches, from the same common source, and not from each other. The first from Christ, before he finally ascended to the Heavens; the last in a miraculous manner, after his ascent. From these inspired men, the same instruction in relation to the first day of the week is received, and the same example set In reference to this day, John says, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day"—Rev. i. 10: this appellation

being distinctively given to the first day of the week as the day of our Lord's resurrection

Thus have we shewn, that by the same authority, and on the same moral principle that Saturday became the Jewish Sabbath, Sunday, the first day of the week, has become the Christian Sabbath; and by consequence that all the holiness which attached to the Sabbath in the fourth command, still attaches to the first day of the week, the Christian Sabbath; that it is just as lawful now to murder, steal, bear false witness, covet, dishonour parents, take the name of the Lord in vain, and worship idols, as to violate the Sabbath of the first day of the week.

We have said, that the term "Sabbath," designates the *intention* of the seventh day, but does not prescribe its *employments*. The spirit and the general manner of spending the day is expressed in the fourth command. Thou shalt keep it holy. Neither thou, nor any under thy control, shall do any work on that day. But our subject requiring, that we point out the scriptural manner in which this day should be spent by the churches of Christ, we shall now proceed to exhibit the employments in which these bodies should be engaged on this holy day.

In this part of our subject, we must be guided by "the law and the testimony," as contained in the New Testament; since in this portion only of the holy volume have we an account of the organization of Christian churches, and of their manner of spending the Christian Sabbath.

We begin with the first Church which was organized at Jerusalem. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." Those who were thus assembled were the disciples, in the midst of whom Peter had stood up, as mentioned in the previous chapter, and at whose suggestion they had chosen one in the place of Judas. The hour of assembling was early, since, when Peter defended himself and his brethren against the charge of drunkenness, he observed that it was then but the third hour of the day, which, according to the division of time then in use, was 9 o'clock in the morning. On this day the Spirit was plenteously poured forth, and they all did speak with tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. The multitude being come together, beheld with astonishment the scene, and charged the actors in it with being drunk with new wine. Peter repelled the charge, and embracing the opportunity, preached unto them Jesus. Three thousand gladly received his word, were baptized, and added to the church the same day.

The next account is of the church at Troas—" And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them."

The third is of the church at Corinth. In the last chapter of the first epistle, the Apostle says, " Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye : Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." This passage shews that one part of the employment of the Corinthian and Galatian churches, when assembled together on the first day of the week, was to contribute for the saints. For had they laid by them in store at home, gatherings would have been necessary when the Apostle came.

In the 12th chapter of the epistle, the Apostle proceeds to the subject of spiritual gifts ; and after discoursing about them for some time, sets forth the infinite superiority of love over the most splendid gifts, and the vast importance of this holy principle in binding the whole body together as with a golden and infrangible chain. He then resumes the subject of spiritual gifts, directs the time and the order in which they are to be exercised, and points out the benefits resulting from their use. " Follow after charity," or love, as this term imports, " and desire spiritual gifts," saith he, " but rather that ye may prophesy." " If, therefore, the whole church be come together into one place, and"—" all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all ; and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest, and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth." " Let the prophets speak, two or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace, for ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted." It may be proper here to remark, that the term prophet does not only mean one who foretells events, but one who also teaches. That this is its meaning in this place, appears satisfactorily from the ends that are to be accomplished, by the speaking of the prophet, viz. the conversion of an unbeliever, and the instruction and comfort of believers ; and from the further fact, that the others are to judge ; which could not be done in relation to an event, that should be foretold under divine influence. The Apostle closes his directions on this subject with these impressive words—" If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I

write unto you are the *commandments of the Lord*"—1 Cor. iv. 17. Does the Apostle write of the first day of the week, as the day of the stated assembling of the church? It is the commandment of the Lord. Does he write of the partaking of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week? It is the commandment of the Lord. Does he write of the exercise of gifts, when the whole church come together? It is the commandment of the Lord

That prayer, singing, and reading the scriptures, formed important parts of the employments of the churches on the first day of the week, is too obvious to need remark.

"Now of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum"—God has instituted a Sabbath in the earth, and appointed the first day of the week for its enjoyment. The primitive churches assembled together in one place on this day, and engaged in the holy duties that we have stated. The result of all which is, that this manner in which the Christian Sabbath was spent by these churches, is the scriptural manner of spending this holy day.

We shall now proceed to point out the objects which would be most likely to be secured by *such* a manner of spending this day.

The first of these objects is the increase of the worshippers of God. The Apostle saith, "If the whole church be come together into one place, and"—"all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one that is unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all. And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest, and so falling down on his face, *he will worship God.*" Of this we have an exemplification on the day of Pentecost. The disciples being all together with one accord on the first day of the week, and speaking as the spirit gave them utterance, the multitude of unbelievers came in, and whilst Peter was prophesying, three thousand were brought to become *the worshippers of God.*

A second object will be secured in the instruction and comfort of the church. We are told by the Apostle, that "When Christ ascended up on high, he received gifts for men. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for *the edifying of the body of Christ.*"—Eph. iv. 8, 11, 12. The apostles, and prophets as foretellers of events, have ceased, but the remaining gifts are still continued. To the Romans he says, "Having then gifts differing according to he grace that is given unto us, whether prophecy, let us ro p hesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry,

let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness."—Rom xii 6, 7, 8. To the Corinthians he saith. "The manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given, by the spirit, the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge by the same spirit; to another, faith by the same spirit; to another, the gifts of healing by the same spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophesy; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, divers kinds of tongues; to another, the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that one and the self same spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it, therefore, not of the body? And if the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it, therefore, not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members, every one of them in the body as it has pleased him" "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."—1st Cor. xii. 7—18, 27. Again, "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophecy one by one, that *all may learn, and all may be comforted.*" 1st Cor. xiv. 29—31.

In the delineation of the natural body, and the various uses of its members, we have a striking illustration of the church, the body of Christ, and the benefits resulting from the appropriate exercise of the gifts of her various members. For as the members of the natural body form a complete whole, and produce their results by united and appropriate acts; so the members of the church constitute the spiritual body of Christ; and in the performance of their respective duties in their appropriate places, form one

complete spiritual whole. It is true that the various gifts of the church may, and should be, exercised at other times than those, when the members are convened. yet it is in the collective character when assembled, on the first day of the week, that they are to be developed, receive their proper direction, and gain their proper energy. Now it is evident, that if the natural body is to maintain its dignity and usefulness, it must be by the united exercise of its members as a whole, under the guidance of the animating spirit within ; so if the church of Christ is to maintain her dignity and usefulness, it must be by the union and appropriate exercise of her members, under the guidance of her Great Head. The grand object to be accomplished by the exercise of gifts on the first day of the week, as one part of the manner in which the day should be spent, is "*that all may learn, and all may be comforted,*"

A third benefit to be secured by a scriptural observance of the Christian Sabbath will be found in every member's falling into his proper sphere. There is a diversity of gifts for the accomplishment of different objects, all tending to the grand result of *edifying the body of Christ.* It is, therefore, all important, that every one should know and use his proper gift of God. This is to be ascertained by their exercise before the church, who is constituted the judge. Upon the present plan of the church's meeting on some day or evening in the week for business *only*, and not assembling on the Sabbath for the exercise of gifts, or spending the day together as a body for social duties, no opportunity is presented for the members to exhibit their different talents for usefulness. Hence many a modest spirit is repressed and kept back, till urged forward by some powerful agency or sore affliction. Hence, too, has arisen the unscriptural order of things among us, which knows no intermediate office in the ministry between the deaconship and the preaching office. Hence it is, too, that many who are sensible of no call to the preaching of the Gospel, but who possess profitable gifts for exhortation, are hindered from that useful department of service to the church ; whilst others, who have gifts for exhortation only, present themselves in a vain conceit of their powers as candidates for the pulpit, into which they are too easily admitted by their brethren, who exercise not the discrimination necessary for distinguishing between the different gifts, and their respective destinations. Now the assembling of the church on every first day of the week for social worship, would open the way, without embarrassment, for each member to exhibit

his gift, and the judgment of the brethren would place him in his proper sphere. Then should we have the exhorter, the evangelist, the pastor, the man of wisdom, the man of knowledge, come forth to his proper service, a benefit of incalculable importance to the church, and to the cause of the church's Head.

A fourth benefit will be secured in that particular and consistent acquaintance with the scriptures, which will be gained by their frequent and careful reading by the whole body, and the light that will be thrown on them in the exercise of the various gifts. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. If the scripture be designed for this important end, then should every Christian be intimately acquainted with its holy contents. It is a well known fact, that the body of Christians, as well as of mankind in general, are in limited circumstances, so that their time is mostly occupied in making temporal provision for themselves and families Very little of it is, therefore, left for reading, and that little too seldom rightly employed. Not a few also are incapable of reading, especially among our domestics. Now the stated reading of the scriptures in the church will remedy this deficiency, a deficiency which the preaching of the gospel does not fully supply.

In the reading of the holy word, as the act of the church, the minds of the members will be led up to "the law and the testimony" as the perfect standard of faith and practice. The principles of the doctrine of Christ, the privileges and the duties of his people, will all come under review in their proper connexion, and with their proper sanctions. Light will be thrown upon different passages obscure to some, but plain to others. Apparent inconsistencies will be reconciled by those to whom the Lord has imparted the needful gifts; and the duties enjoined by the Head of the Church will be enforced with an authority not to be resisted "The law and the testimony" will become the standard of faith and practice in *fact*, and not in name only. We shall, then, no more hear from christians the unscriptural language "I do not *feel* to do this or that." Although *such feeling* may be in direct opposition to the word of God. Neither shall we witness the unscriptural conduct built upon such an unscriptural sentiment Feeling will not be the standard of duty, but the word of the Lord. The inquiry will not be "How *feelest* thou?" But "What is written in the law? How *readest*

thou ?" Luke x. 26. Then, too, will the mere influence of a name, though aggrandized by rank or wealth, or chained by ignorance, yet consecrated by age, but unsustained by scripture, lose its baneful force in the church ; the opinions of her members will pass for what they are worth, whilst, unshammelled by prejudice, ignorance or passion, she will shine forth in the reflected light of her Great Head, " fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."—Cant. vi. 10

A fifth object, and not the least, will be the redeeming of the Sabbath from a partial use, and from its abuse. If the moral obligation of this day be as we have stated it, and the manner of spending it be such as we have described, then the custom of churches in appropriating it for the preaching of the Gospel, as the *only* public or congregational service, in which the minister conducts the whole by singing, prayer and preaching, whilst the members take no visible part, except as singers or hearers, intermingled with the congregation, is a partial use of this day ; for although their attendance upon the ministry of the word is an important duty, so far as it goes, yet does it not come up to the whole of their duty, as members of the church. The preaching of the Gospel belongs immediately to the minister, though more generally to all the Lord's people, in such a sense that they should make all the provision in their power for its success. In the performance of this service, the preacher should exercise his discretion as to the times when he will engage in it, and surely as the Christian Sabbath affords a most favourable opportunity, he will embrace it with all readiness. It ought also to form a part of the public service of the church. But the service of preaching occupies only about two or three hours of the day. That portion, unoccupied in this duty, should be employed by the church in her other duties. It does not appear to be the design of the Gospel. that this day should be spent by the members at home, in their individual character, in those hours not employed in preaching, but in the church in their collective character, because the objects to be secured in the scriptural manner of spending the day, cannot be secured by individual, but by congregated effort. To spend the day aright, then, would redeem it from a partial use, whilst it would by no means exclude the preaching of the Gospel ; on the contrary, it would the better prepare the way for the proper effect of that important institution of the church's Head.

The redemption of the Sabbath from its partial use,

would lead to its redemption from abuse. It is much to be feared that many christians, from the fact of the Sabbath being used principally as a day of preaching, conceive that when they have attended upon this duty, they have done all that is required. They are, therefore, not unfrequently led to waste its remaining hours in idle conversation, in a mental arrangement of their business, in visiting unprofitably, or in sleep. In those churchess, too, that have preaching but one or two Sabbaths in the month, the members seem not to consider the other Sabbaths in any other light than as days of temporal rest, and therefore remain at home unprofitably, or worse, in lounging about their habitations, strolling over their farms, or in going to, or returning from market. Does it not appear that this practice seems to regard this day *only* as a holy day, in a sort of general or undefined sense, amounting to nothing more than cessation from earthly labor? Is it any wonder, then, that the world should regard it in the same light? If they see christians, who are represented as lights in the world, exhibiting such a mountain of darkness, is it at all surprising that they should fall into its deadly shade? If they see the church, which is represented as the pillar and ground of the truth, exhibiting such a foundation of error, and building on it such a superstructure of impiety, is it at all surprising that they should adopt the same ground, and erect the same pillar, until, (unless God mercifully interpose,) its stability be tried by the winds and the waves of divine wrath, and being found insecure, shall give way, nnd involve in its tremendous overthrow, those who have rested upon it?

If on the contrary, churches should observe this day in a sacred manner, meeting early, and continuing late in their proper duties, with suitable intervals for refreshment; if they should diligently employ this day as a *whole* for improving their spiritual state, and laying up treasure in heaven, as their members employ the other days of the week in improving their temporal estate, and laying up treasures on earth, would they not themselves be rescued from the abuse of the Sabbath, and would not their example be most likely to rescue it from abuse by the ungodly? For christians form a large part of the community, having under their influence many children, servants, and others. Many too form what are called adherents to particular denominations, whilst a large number besides are friendly to religion in general, but show no decided preference for one seet over another.

Now if christians, who form so large a part of the commu-

nity, were to rise as one man on the side of the Sabbath; if in their collective character as churches, they were in the strength that their Lord has given them, to labour to redeem this day from partial use and abuse, what a powerful effect would be produced upon those under their influence, upon their adherents, upon the world. "Concentrated action is powerful action." What have not christians, by this mode of action, effected within the last half century, by the Concert of Prayer, Bible, Tract, Missionary, Education and Anti-Intemperance Societies? Let one other class of societies be added, *the Lord's Day Society*. Let every church form such a society, and every member of the church be a member of it; then would this blessed day be restored to its proper use; and this object secured, the benefit would be incalculable.

We proceed now to the consideration of the sixth and last object that we shall notice, as most likely to be secured, in a scriptural observance of the Christian Sabbath.

You and we, dear brethren, have often asked, why have we such a general state of coldness in religion? why is it, that in revivals only we have life? and why, after they decline, do we sink down again into a cold formal state? After making all needful allowance for the weakness of human nature, we are of opinion, that the cause is to be found mainly, as means are regarded, in the partial use and abuse of the Sabbath. And this opinion is built upon the known constitution of our nature as social beings, in accordance with which its Great Author orders his dealings with us. You are aware that we are so constituted, as to feel more or less interested in any object of pursuit, in proportion to the frequency or infrequency of our attention to it. If, in any concern, we think much of it, meet often to converse with those who are engaged it, and use consistent means to deepen it in our souls, it will grow in our estimation, and command our best exertions in its favor. Success will then most likely attend our efforts in its pursuit. If we act otherwise, the result will be of an opposite character. These remarks bear with peculiar force upon the grand concerns of religion. If we permit our hearts to be engrossed with the concerns of earth, if we talk little about religion, and do less in it; if we neglect prayer and the reading of the scriptures; if we forsake the assembling of ourselves together for religious duties—our love grows cold, our zeal declines, our energies are paralyzed. If we act differently, how different is our spiritual state!

Now, upon this principle of our nature, which we have

been considering, and the effects which its cultivation or neglect produces, are the exhortations in the scripture to union, effort and engagedness predicated ; particularly the following—"Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works ; *not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is ;* but exhorting one another ; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."—Heb. x 24, 25. The stated day for the assembling of christians is the first day of the week, as we have shewn. Six days are given for labor by the same authority which reserves the seventh for rest and holy use. On this day, unfettered by worldly employments, leaving all his temporal concerns under the care of his Heavenly Father, who careth for him, the child of God is to repair to the assembly of his brethren, "call home his thoughts that rove abroad," and fix them intensely on heavenly themes : there, in concert with his brethren, he is to enjoy the privileges of his Father's house ; there, by the authority of the Great Head of the Church, and with the promise of his blessing, the members are called to exhort one another, to speak to each other in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, to pray with and for each other, to open the charter of their privileges, to lay hold on the exceeding great and precious promises of a faithful God, to hear the animating sounds of HIM, who spake as never man spake, and to obtain by holy concert, and holy wrestling, that strength for holy living, which union of numbers in a righteous cause, will, under the divine blessing, assuredly impart.

A Sabbath, thus spent, with the presence of the blessed Redeemer, would invigorate the graces, enlarge the hearts, improve the gifts, and strengthen the faith of true believers. They would thus be prepared for the trials and duties of the week, have their affections more intensely and undividedly set upon things above, and be rendered comparatively indifferent to "aught this scene could threaten or indulge." A savour would remain upon their spirits, that would diffuse its sweetness on all their worldly intercourse, their duties and relations in life, and wake up frequent desires for the return of each succeeding Sabbath. And every Sabbath thus spent would exert a moral power upon their souls, that would produce, as far as consistent with our imperfect state here, permanent and growing life in religion. The influence would be extended to the world, in a degree transcending our present conceptions : Zion would then travail indeed ; and then she would bring forth children "numerous as drops of morning dew." The church would then arise, and shake

herself from the dust, and put on her beautiful garments, and become the joy of the whole earth. Then should we not have to mourn over our so general and long continued coldness in religion, but enjoying the life-giving influence of the Divine Spirit, we should exhibit consistent energy in the service of our God, and in the pursuit of eternal glories.

Thus, brethren, have we, though imperfectly, attempted to point out the scriptural manner of spending the Christian Sabbath by the churches, and stated some of the objects most likely to be secured by such a manner of spending it. We add our earnest and affectionate request, that you will give this our labor of love, a patient, scriptural, and prayerful reading, that you may "mark, learn, inwardly digest," and reduce to practice, its contents, if found to be according to God's most holy word. The subject has grown under our hands, and did our limits permit, we could enlarge still more, and point out the intimate connexion which a right observance of the Sabbath has with the best interests of society, and the glory of God. But we forbear, and leave to your own reflections that extended view of this important subject, which we would willingly present, but which we are admonished by the unusual length of this letter to withhold.

To conclude—You will see, brethren, from what we have said, that our object is to have you taught in that truth, by which you are to be sanctified, that you may judge in all spiritual matters for yourselves, and become rooted and settled in the faith as it is in Jesus. Various are our plans, as you know, for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, all drawn, as we believe, from God's word; but that these may become effectual, the church must assist by her prayers and her efforts. The church, the glorious representative of Christ on earth, who is to be the light of the world, the pillar and ground of the truth, must be roused to let her light shine, to exhibit the stable ground, and the elevated pillar of divine truth. She must replenish her wasting lamps, and re-kindle her holy flame, at the altar of united devotion, on the return of the resurrection day of her exalted and ascended Head. On her must the rays of the Sun of Righteousness fall on the return of that day, on which, ascending from the tomb, He brought life and immortality to light; that they may be reflected upon a benighted world with their fullest influence.

When the church shall come up to her high privileges; when on the holy Sabbath she shall appear in the majesty of her Lord; when the whole moral force of her spiritual

engines shall be brought, under the command of "the Captain of her Salvation," to bear upon the purposes of God; when his throne shall be encircled on every returning "first day of the week," with the prayers and the praises of the congregations of the righteous—then shall the windows of Heaven be opened, and a blessing be poured out most abundantly upon the saints—then will energy divine fall upon the counsels, the plans, and the efforts of "the servants of the most High God"—then will that vast moral machinery, now in operation for pulling down the strong holds of satan, and building thereon the Redeemer's kingdom, exert its mighty influence with complete success—then will the conquests of Immanuel be pushed to universal empire, and the headstone of the mighty superstructure be brought out with shoutings, crying "Grace, Grace, unto it."

One inquiry, and we have done: If the great Head of the church were now to descend to the earth, and visit his churches, would he not look for them, in obedience to his own appointment, in their assembled character, on the first day of the week? Would he in their present state, find them so convened? Ah! no! Let this fact arouse you from your slumbers; lead you to retrace your steps; and amend your ways. For, "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find *rest* for your souls." Jer. vi. 16.

W. B. JOHNSON, *President.*

B. MANLY, *Secretary.*

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